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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|

10/662,687

09/15/2003

Qi-Feng Ma

9780

7590

12/08/2006

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EXAMINER

OLSEN, KAJ K

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1753

DATE MAILED: 12/08/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

|                              |                                      |                                    |  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Office Action Summary</b> | <b>Application No.</b><br>10/662,687 | <b>Applicant(s)</b><br>MA, QI-FENG |  |
|                              | <b>Examiner</b><br>Kaj K. Olsen      | <b>Art Unit</b><br>1753            |  |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-33 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-33 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                       | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____.  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Election/Restrictions***

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
  - I. Claims 1-11, drawn to a gel mold, classified in class 264, subclass 261.
  - II. Claims 12-33, drawn to a gel medium, classified in class 204, subclass 617.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

2. Inventions I and II are related as apparatus and product made. The inventions in this relationship are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the apparatus as claimed is not an obvious apparatus for making the product and the apparatus can be used for making a materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different apparatus (MPEP § 806.05(g)). It appears that claims 12 and 23 are drawn to just the gel medium itself and that the gel mold is merely the means for preparing the gel medium. Hence, the various mold limitations of these claims as being interpreted as being the just the apparatus utilized to prepare the gel. Although the examiner is familiar with the use of product-by-process claims (i.e. a claim drawn to a product made by a process from an earlier claim), the examiner is unfamiliar with the instant case of product-by-apparatus claims, and the examiner questions whether this is appropriate. In product-by-process claims, it is Office policy to not limit the product claims to manipulations of the process steps that preceded it. See MPEP 2113. Consequently, the examiner will presume that a product-by-apparatus claim would also not be limited by the apparatus utilized to make the product. Hence, the gel medium of claims

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12 and 23 could have been made in a non-curved gel mold and curved only after gelation and removal from the mold.

3. Because these inventions are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and there would be a serious burden on the examiner if restriction is not required because the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art in view of their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

4. Alternatively, if applicant meant for claims 12 and 23 to be interpreted as being a gel medium and the gel mold combined (and not product-by-apparatus as the examiner has interpreted it), the applicant is invited to amend these gel medium claims so as to make it clear that the claims are drawn to a combination of a gel mold with the gel medium inserted inside. If applicant successfully amends the claims such that claims 12-33 are drawn to a combination of gel mold with the gel medium inserted inside, the examiner would consider withdrawing this restriction requirement and examine all of claims 1-33.

5. Because applicant appears to be *pro se* (see MPEP 812.01) and because there is some confusion as to how to interpret claims 12 and 23 (see paragraphs 2 and 4 above), no telephone call was made.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kaj Olsen whose telephone number is (571) 272-1344. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nam Nguyen, can be reached on 571-272-1342. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

AU 1753  
December 5, 2006



**KAJ K. OLSEN**  
**PRIMARY EXAMINER**